

# **An Enlightenment Kaleidoscope Unveiled: Joseph Friedrich zu Racknitz's *Presentation and History of the Taste of the Leading Nations***

Simon Swynfen Jervis FSA

Joseph Friedrich zu Racknitz's *Presentation and History of the Taste of the Leading Nations*, published in the 1790s, was an unprecedented attempt to encapsulate the history and progress of interior decoration and architecture, not only from their origins in Ancient Egypt to their latest manifestations in modern England, but also on a universal stage, from Mexico to Tahiti. Remarkably Sir John Soane owned two of the 23 surviving copies of this extraordinarily rare and surprisingly unknown book. Soane was doubtless attracted by its 48 spectacular colour plates, representing 24 different tastes.

Racknitz's book was translated from the German and edited for publication in 2019 for the Getty Research Institute by Simon Swynfen Jervis FSA, who was Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, before serving as the National Trust's Director of Historic Buildings. He will give an illustrated lecture on this visually exciting book and its remarkable author.

## Zoom lecture details:

Topic: FHS Events lecture 3: Simon Jervis Lecture

Time: Jul 12, 2020 07:00 PM (BST) London

## Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96984331710?pwd=djg1SHk2RHpsVjI4MUZsU292R3BEUT09>

Meeting ID: 969 8433 1710

Password: 236358

Attendees will be admitted from the waiting room from 18.45. Please make sure you are muted and your cameras are turned off. Please note that for security reasons we will lock the meeting at 19.20, so please make sure you have joined us by then.

The lecture will be followed by a round of Q & A. Please use the chat message box at the bottom of your zoom window.

If you are using Zoom software, Zoom have increased their security and you may be required to install an update.

The FHS has decided to invite the members of other like-minded societies around the world. If you are not yet a member but would like to join the society, please check out our website <https://www.furniturehistorysociety.org> for more information.

We hope to see many of you on Sunday, 12 July.